INNOVATION™
the MAZE AGENCY®
10
HUGHES
MALYAR

from the desk of Jennifer Mays

the MAZE AGENTS

Send your letters to:
3622 Jacob Street, Wheeling, WV 26003

And a heartfelt "Welcome!" to ROBB PHIPPS, who signs on this issue as new regular penciller! Robb's most prominent work (until now, natch) was on the Psychoblast *series from First Comics a while ago. Remaining as inker is, of course, RICK MAGYAR, newly-relocated in his (and my) native Ohio, and inking up a storm on many projects as well as finding the time to pencil a page or two. Look for Rick's full art on a short story in* ***THE MAZE AGENCY SPECIAL #1*** *as well as on an upcoming issue of* The Shadow Strikes! *from DC -- right after you've purchased your monthly quota of Innovation titles!*

Speaking of artists, penciller emeritus ADAM HUGHES and been turning heads at DC, where he's become regular penciller of Justice League America. *In fact, I hope you all caught the guest appearance of Jen, Gabe, and Lt. Bliss on page 16, panel 2 of* JLA *#34. Adam drew them in there and, once I found out about it, I couldn't resist writing dialogue for them! Thanks to JLA Editor and Assistant Editor Andy Helfer and Kevin Dooley for putting up with this silliness.*

Former Maze *editor Michael Eury has also taken up professional residence at DC; best of luck, and a hearty "Yabba-dabba-doo!" Mike.*

Now, on to some mail about Maze *#7, the last issue published by Comico...*

-- Mike W. Barr

Dear Mike:

Maze Agency #7, "Hearts of Glass," was as good as ever. The mode of death was highly ingenius -- some would even say contrived, but they're the cynics in the audience. Good detective stories are based on calculated plots like this -- do you write them by starting at the endpoint and working backwards, or what?

For once, though, the murder mystery wasn't the focal point of the story. That went to Gabe and Jenny's blooming romance, and they deserve it all. In just a few short issues, this has become one of comics' most intriguing relationships and, in contrast to *Moonlighting*, I don't think the premise of the series has been in any way diminished by their resolution of the "will they/won't they" dilemma. They will, and often do, and good for them.

They both appear to be deeply in love with the other, and the fact that they can't keep their hands off each other is a good thing, too.

I'm no judge of the way men look, but I can't blame Gabe for his amorous desires. And they have a long way to go yet. They're only just finding out about each other's pasts, whilst the future beckons.

It's a surprisingly rare event in comics for a relationship to blossom and simply stay healthy, to see partners both at work and at home continue to do well together, and when (not if) the book continues, I hope you keep them on this path -- after all, the Agency would fall apart, otherwise!

Malcolm Bourne
6 Craigwell Road
Prestwish, Manchester M25 8EF
England

The Agency would also fall apart without good artists, and I'd like to thank Greg Shoemaker and Bill Anderson for stepping in on #7.

As to the progression of the Gabe/Jen romance, it was never so much a question of "Will they or won't they?" as it was "When will they?" And I guess we know the answer to that.

You're quite correct in thinking that most issues of Maze *are plotted backward, from the resolution of the story to the beginning.*

At least, that's usually the case -- sometimes it's "Or what?"

(Continued on inside back cover!)

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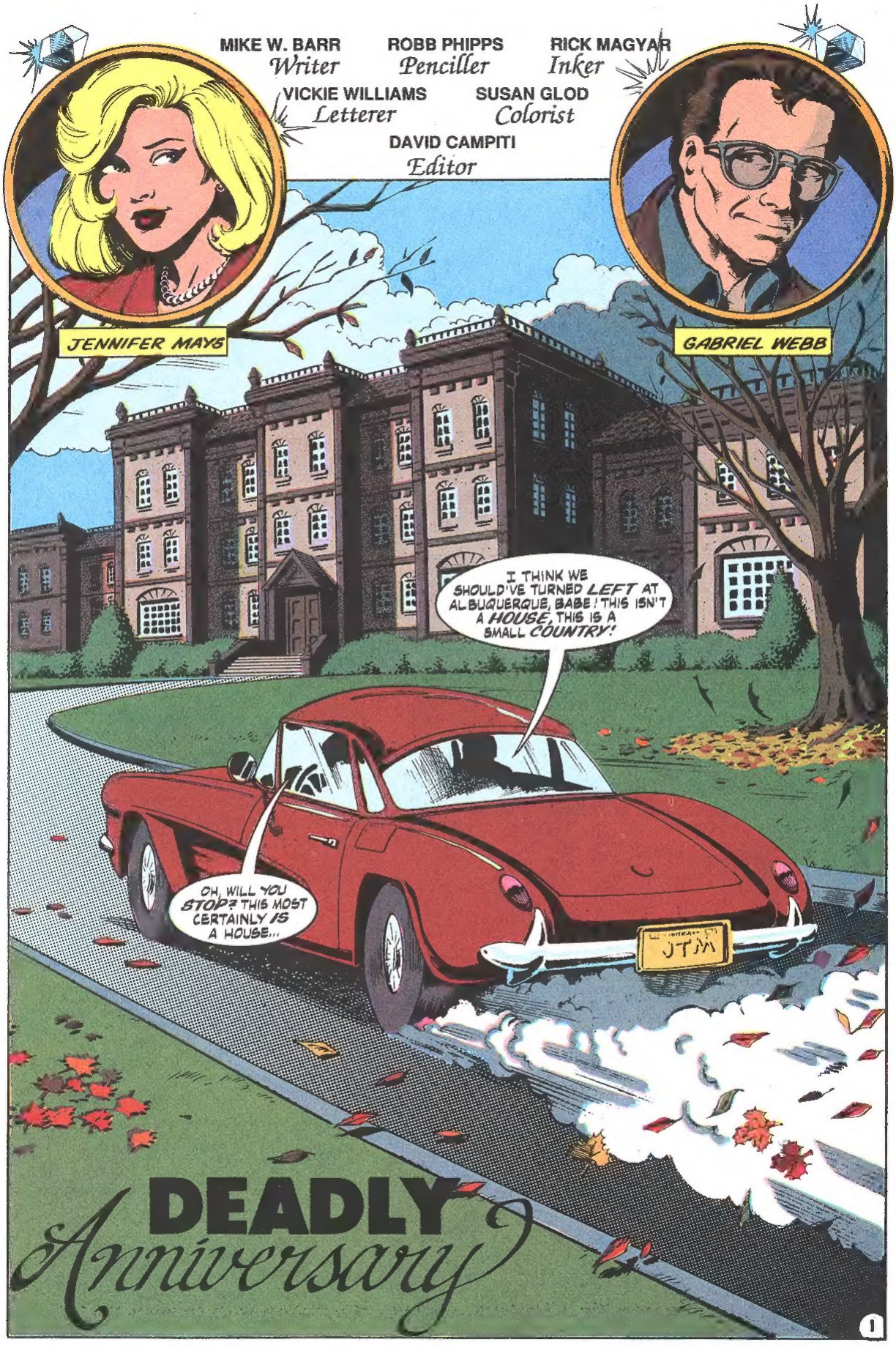
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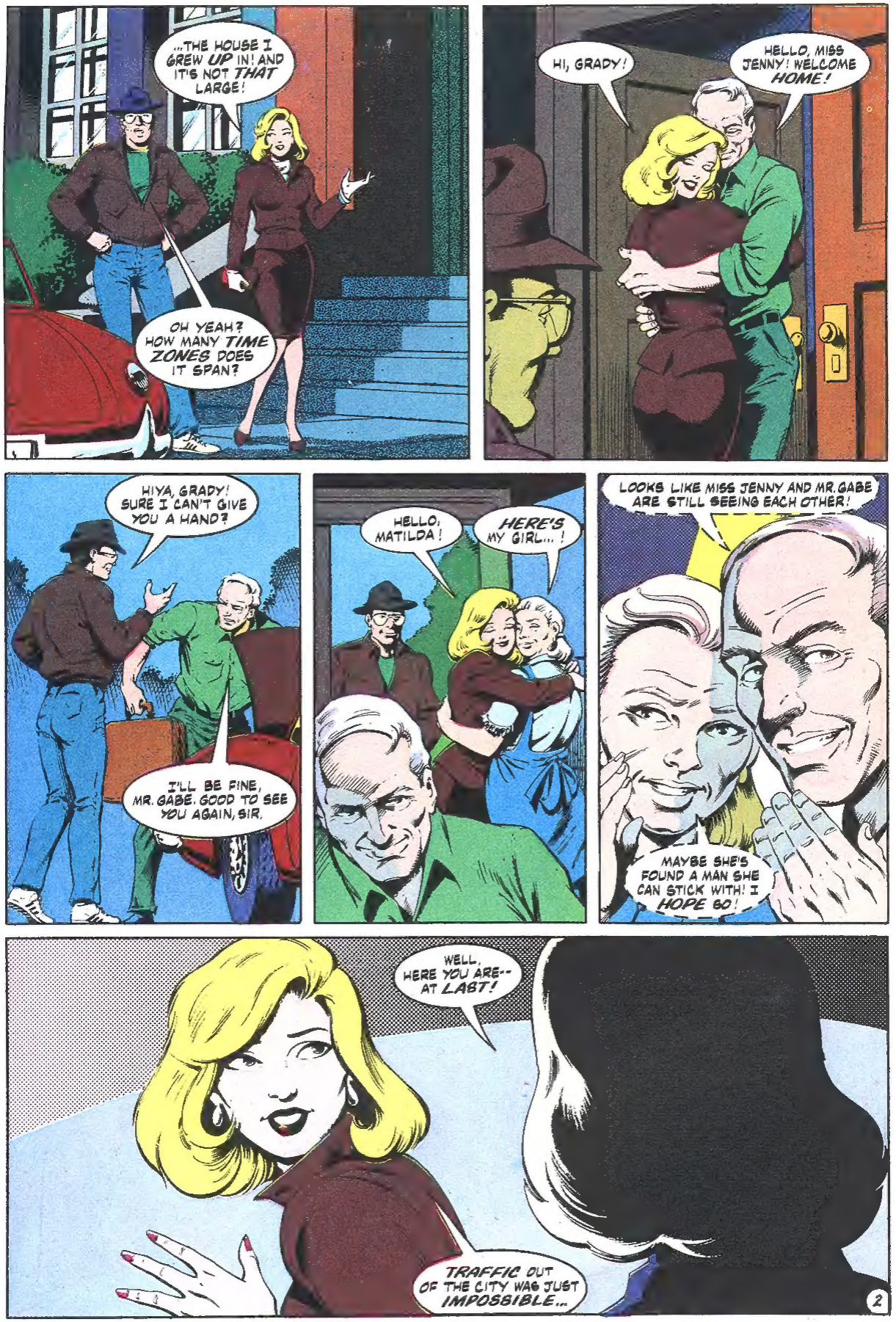
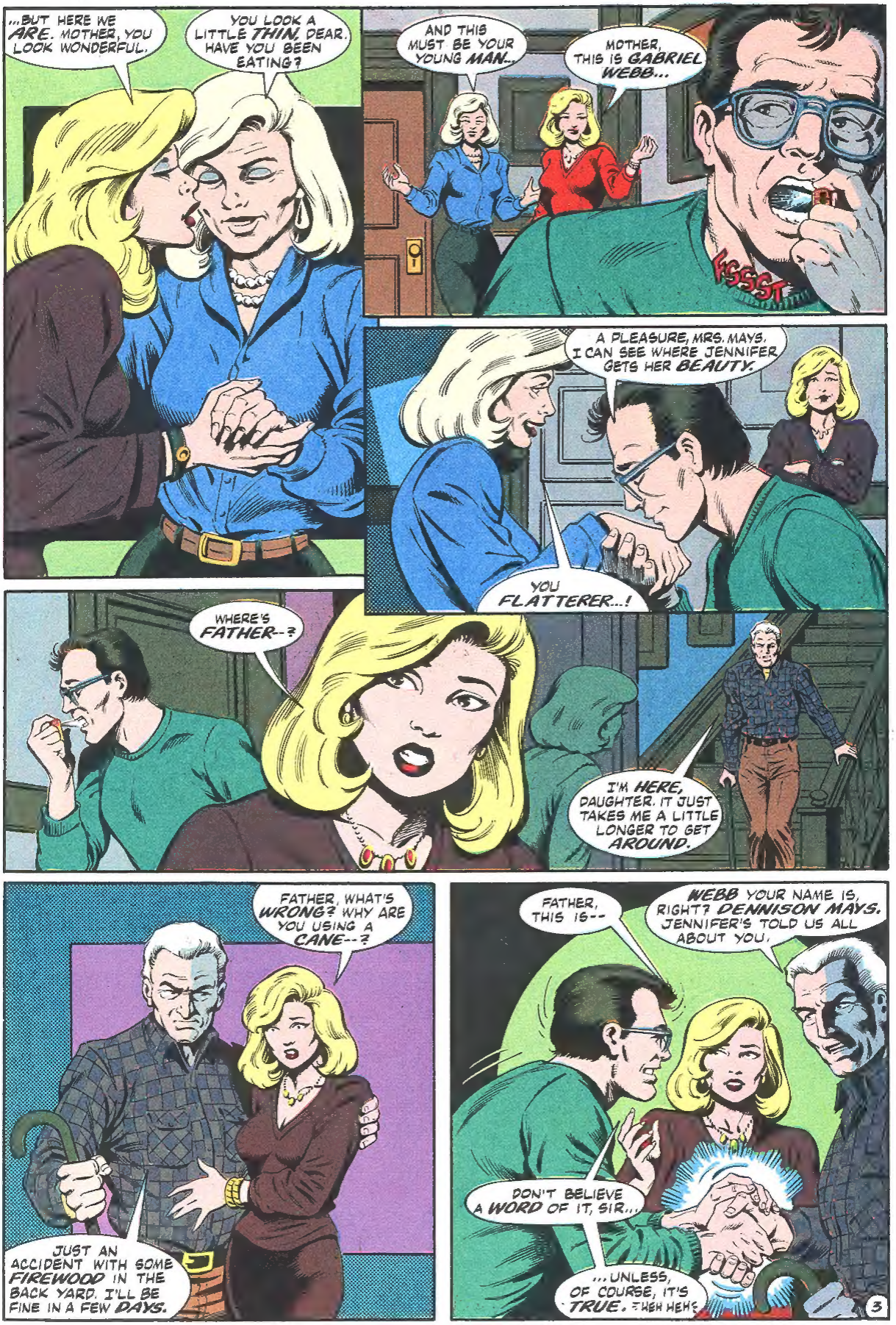
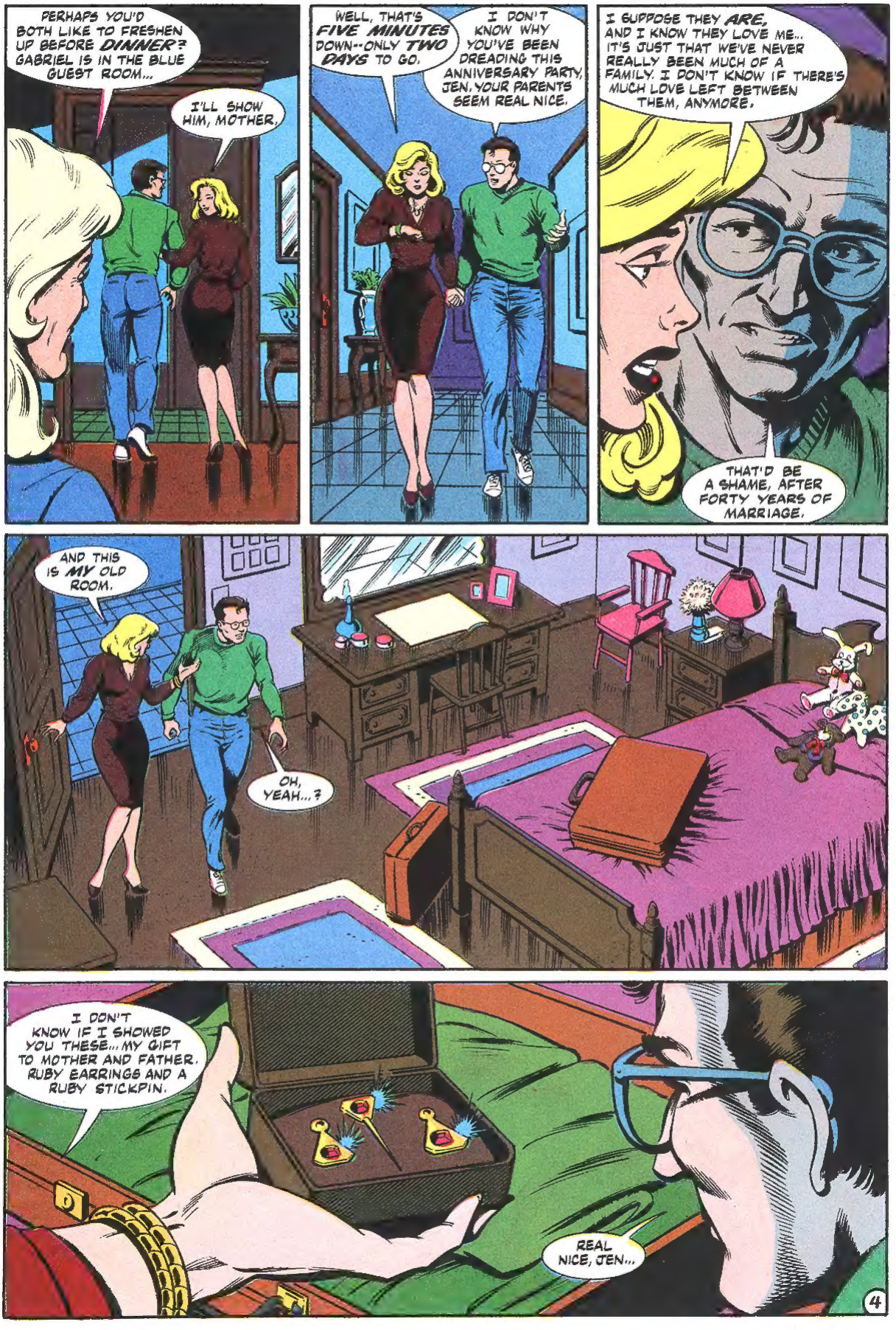
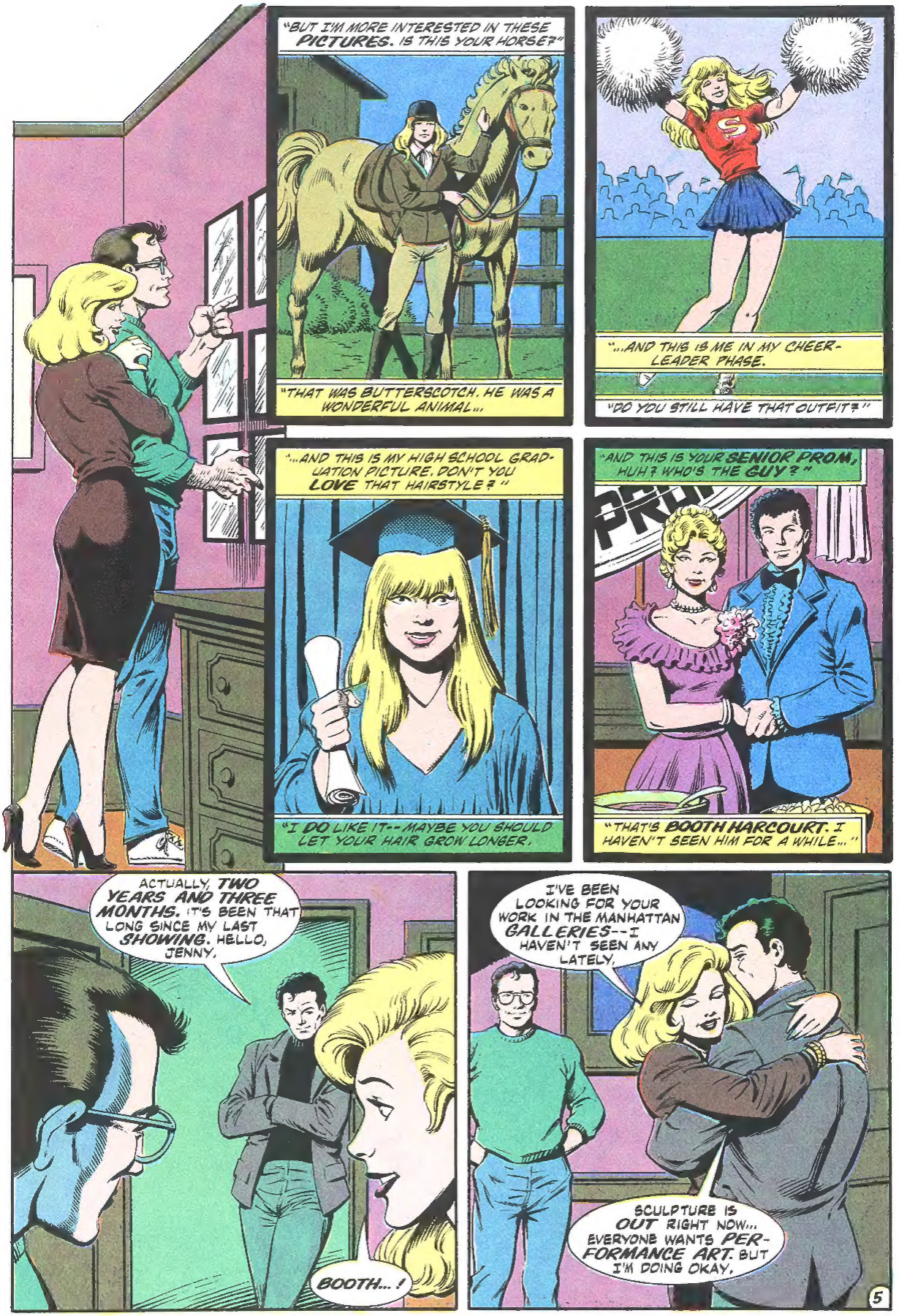
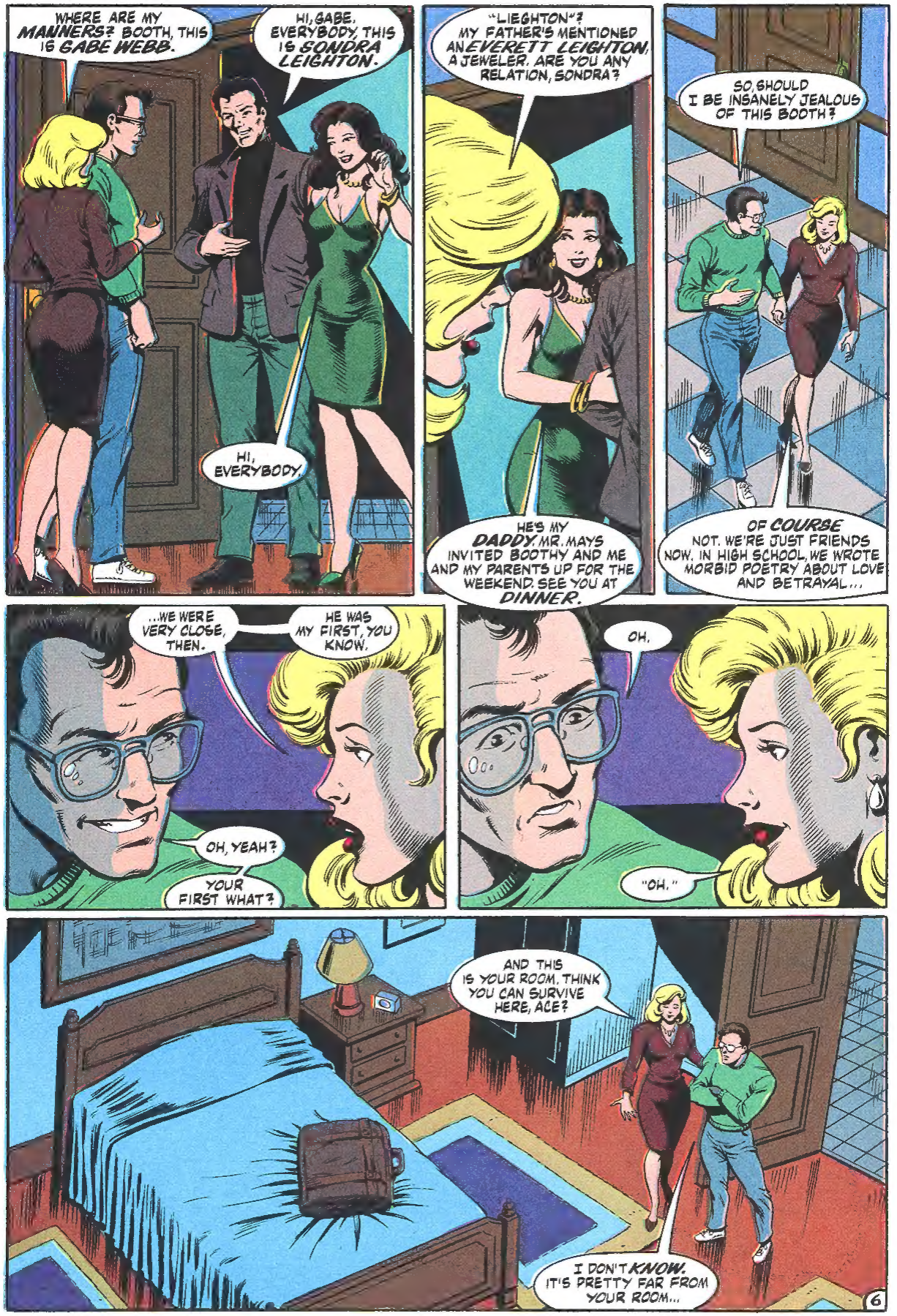
SUSAN GLOD
Colorist
DAVID CAMPITI
Editor
JENNIFER MAYS
GABRIEL WEBB
I THINK WE SHOULD'VE TURNED LEFT AT ALBUQUERQUE, BABE! THIS ISN'T A HOUSE, THIS IS A SMALL COUNTRY!
OH, WILL YOU STOP? THIS MOST CERTAINLY IS A HOUSE...
JTM
DEADLY
Anniversary

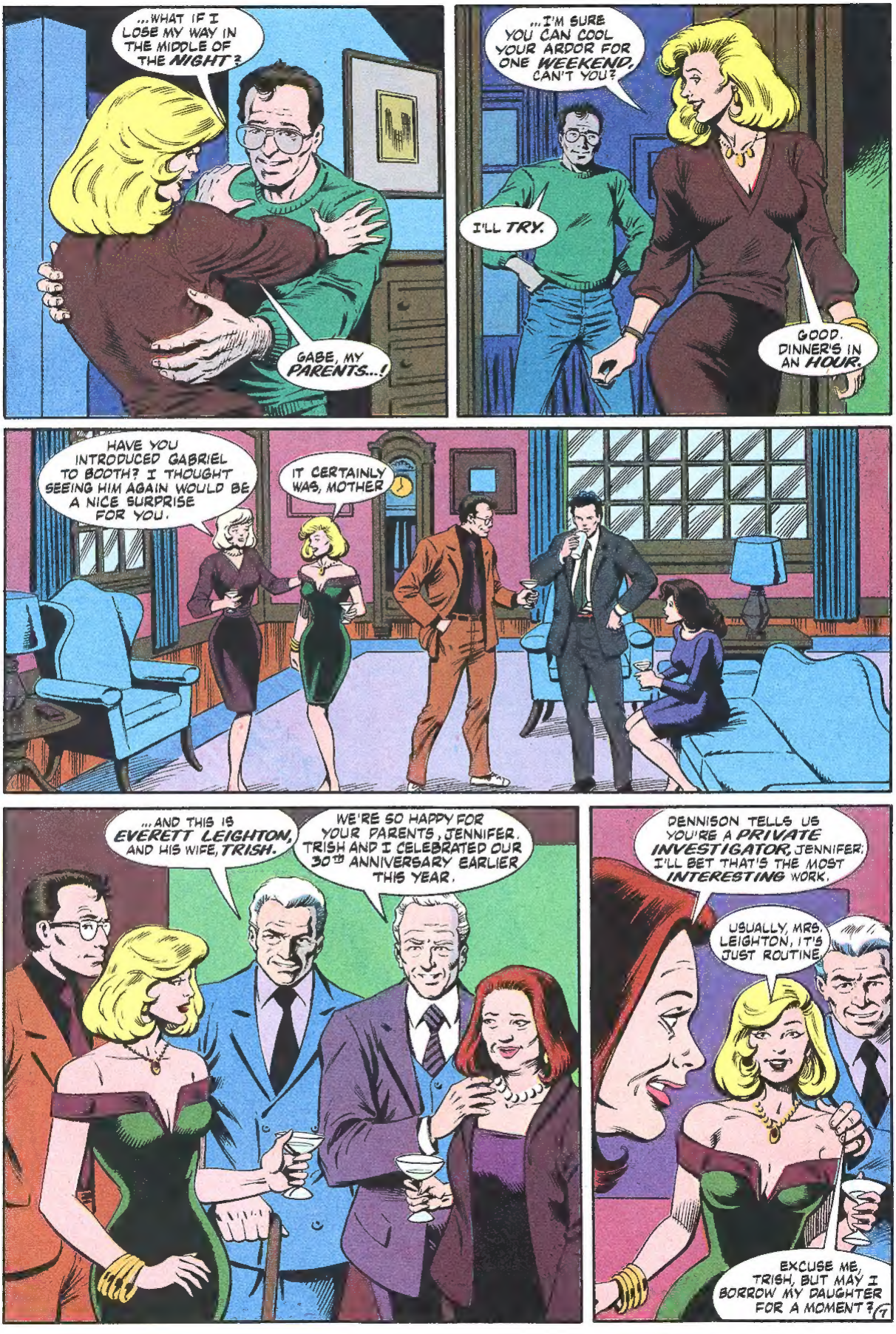

...THE HOUSE I GREW UP IN! AND IT'S NOT THAT LARGE!
OH YEAH? HOW MANY TIME ZONES DOES IT SPAN?
HI, GRADY!
HELLO, MISS JENNY! WELCOME HOME!
HIYA, GRADY! SURE I CAN'T GIVE YOU A HAND?
I'LL BE FINE, MR. GABE. GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, SIR.
HELLO, MATILDA!
HERE'S MY GIRL...!
LOOKS LIKE MISS JENNY AND MR. GABE ARE STILL SEEING EACH OTHER!
MAYBE SHE'S FOUND A MAN SHE CAN STICK WITH! I HOPE SO!
WELL, HERE YOU ARE-- AT LAST!
TRAFFIC OUT OF THE CITY WAS JUST IMPOSSIBLE...

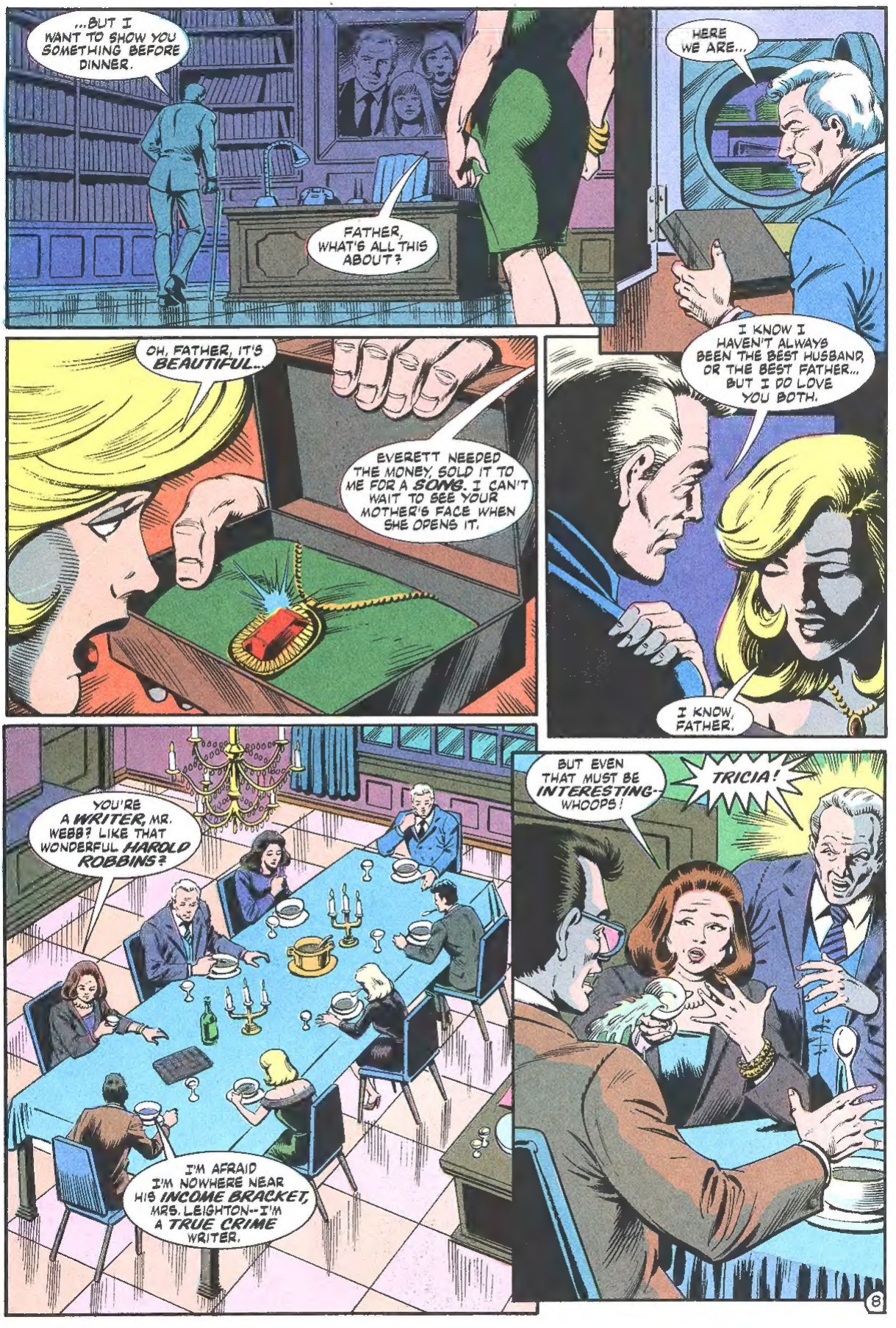

...BUT HERE WE ARE, MOTHER, YOU LOOK WONDERFUL.
YOU LOOK A LITTLE THIN, DEAR. HAVE YOU BEEN EATING?
AND THIS MUST BE YOUR YOUNG MAN...
MOTHER, THIS IS GABRIEL WEBB...
FSSST
A PLEASURE, MRS. MAYS. I CAN SEE WHERE JENNIFER GETS HER BEAUTY.
YOU FLATTERER...!
WHERE'S FATHER--?
I'M HERE, DAUGHTER. IT JUST TAKES ME A LITTLE LONGER TO GET AROUND.
FATHER, WHAT'S WRONG? WHY ARE YOU USING A CANE--?
JUST AN ACCIDENT WITH SOME FIREWOOD IN THE BACK YARD. I'LL BE FINE IN A FEW DAYS.
FATHER, THIS IS--
WEBB YOUR NAME IS, RIGHT? DENNISON MAYS. JENNIFER'S TOLD US ALL ABOUT YOU.
DON'T BELIEVE A WORD OF IT, SIR...
...UNLESS, OF COURSE, IT'S TRUE. HEH HEH!
3

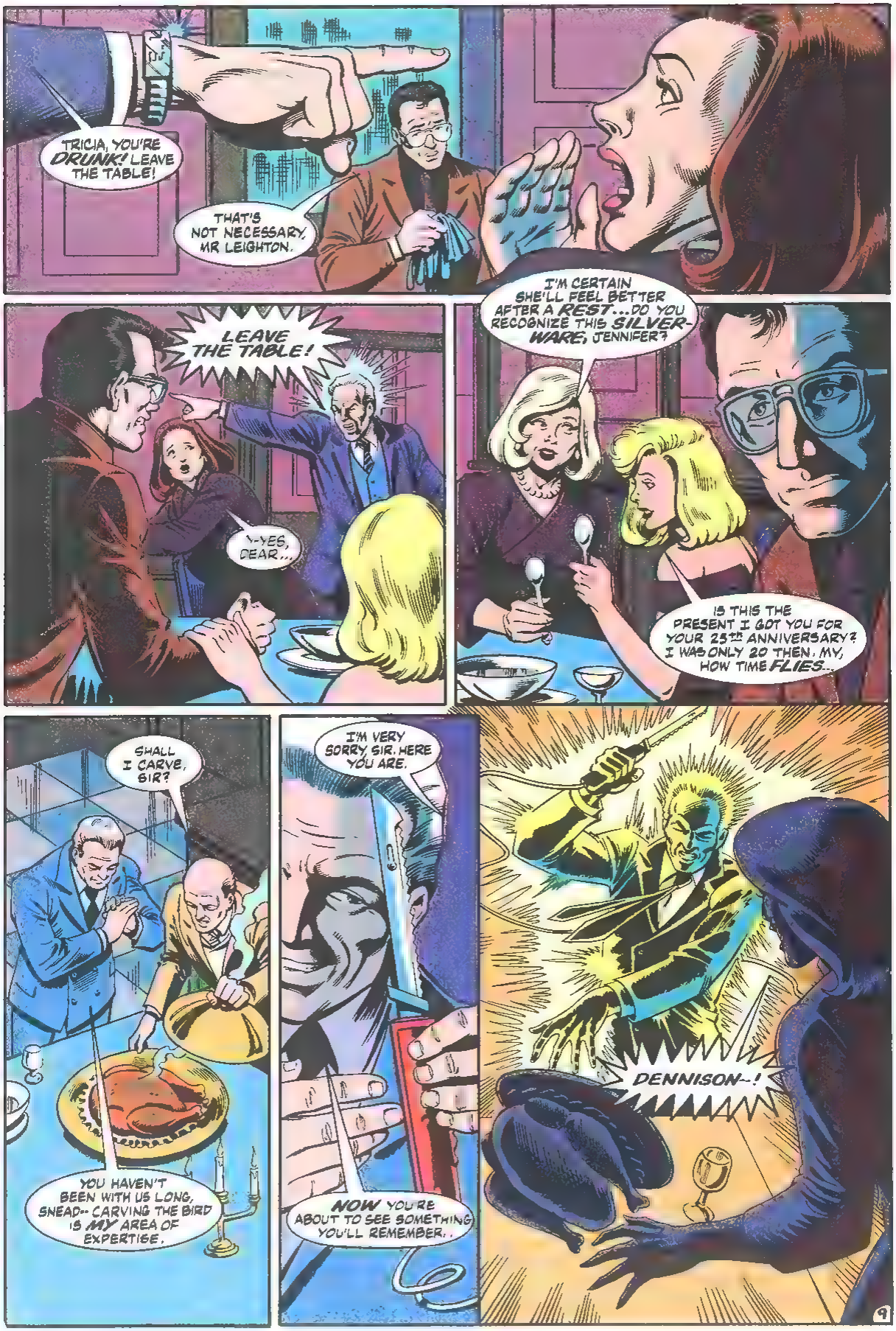

PERHAPS YOU'D BOTH LIKE TO FRESHEN UP BEFORE DINNER? GABRIEL IS IN THE BLUE GUEST ROOM...
I'LL SHOW HIM, MOTHER.
WELL, THAT'S FIVE MINUTES DOWN--ONLY TWO DAYS TO GO.
I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU'VE BEEN DREADING THIS ANNIVERSARY PARTY, JEN. YOUR PARENTS SEEM REAL NICE.
I SUPPOSE THEY ARE, AND I KNOW THEY LOVE ME... IT'S JUST THAT WE'VE NEVER REALLY BEEN MUCH OF A FAMILY. I DON'T KNOW IF THERE'S MUCH LOVE LEFT BETWEEN THEM, ANYMORE.
THAT'D BE A SHAME, AFTER FORTY YEARS OF MARRIAGE.
AND THIS IS MY OLD ROOM.
OH, YEAH...?
I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOWED YOU THESE... MY GIFT TO MOTHER AND FATHER. RUBY EARRINGS AND A RUBY STICKPIN.
REAL NICE, JEN...
4


"BUT I'M MORE INTERESTED IN THESE PICTURES. IS THIS YOUR HORSE?"
"THAT WAS BUTTERSCOTCH. HE WAS A WONDERFUL ANIMAL..."
"...AND THIS IS ME IN MY CHEER-LEADER PHASE.
"DO YOU STILL HAVE THAT OUTFIT?"
"...AND THIS IS MY HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION PICTURE. DON'T YOU LOVE THAT HAIRSTYLE?"
"I DO LIKE IT--MAYBE YOU SHOULD LET YOUR HAIR GROW LONGER.
"AND THIS IS YOUR SENIOR PROM, HUH? WHO'S THE GUY?"
"THAT'S BOOTH HARCOURT. I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM FOR A WHILE..."
ACTUALLY, TWO YEARS AND THREE MONTHS. IT'S BEEN THAT LONG SINCE MY LAST SHOWING. HELLO, JENNY.
BOOTH...!
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOUR WORK IN THE MANHATTAN GALLERIES--I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY LATELY.
SCULPTURE IS OUT RIGHT NOW... EVERYONE WANTS PERFORMANCE ART. BUT I'M DOING OKAY.

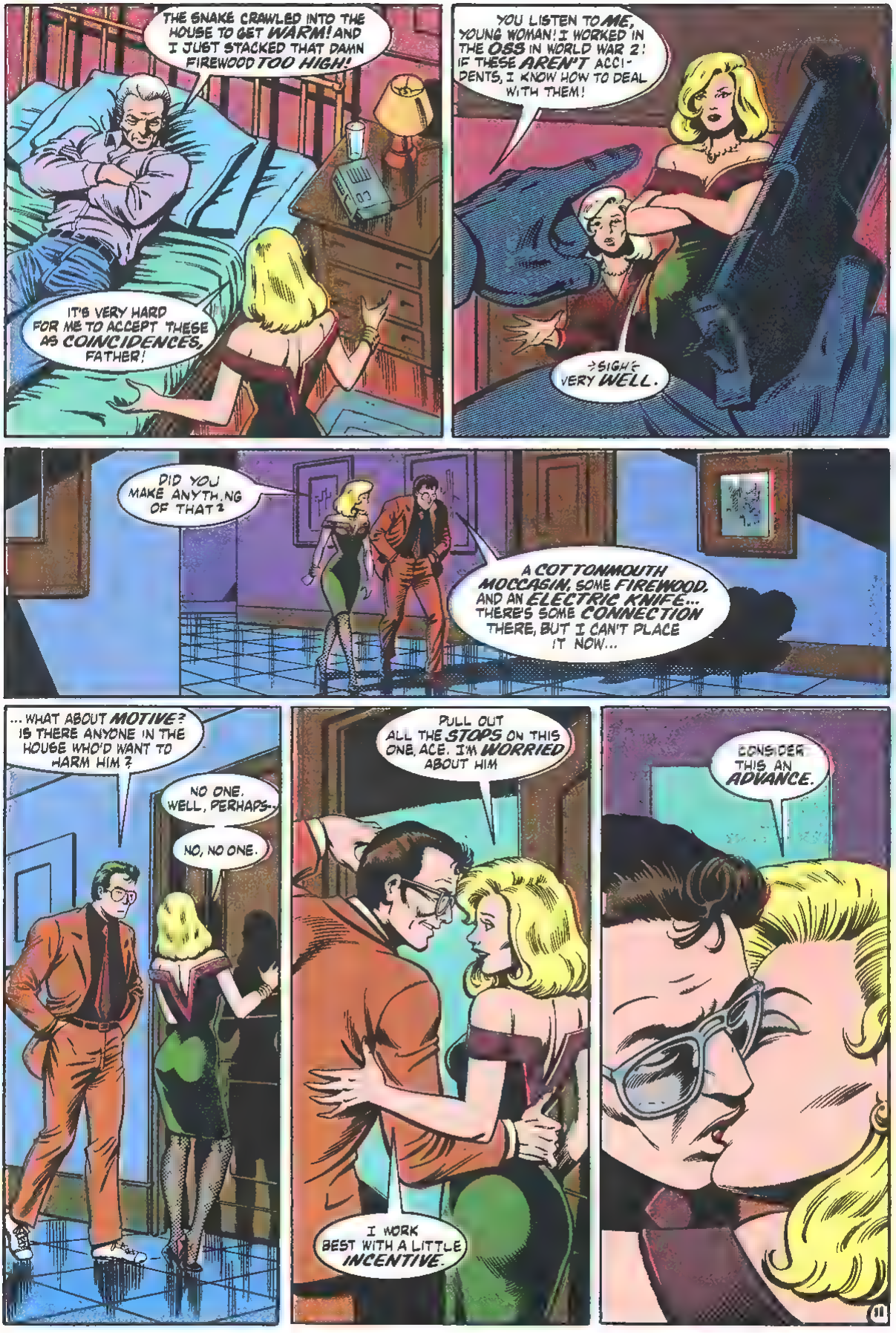

WHERE ARE MY MANNERS? BOOTH, THIS IS GABE WEBB.
HI, GABE. EVERYBODY, THIS IS SONDRA LEIGHTON.
HI, EVERYBODY.
"LIEGHTON"? MY FATHER'S MENTIONED AN EVERETT LEIGHTON, A JEWELER. ARE YOU ANY RELATION, SONDRA?
HE'S MY DADDY. MR. MAYS INVITED BOOTHY AND ME AND MY PARENTS UP FOR THE WEEKEND. SEE YOU AT DINNER.
SO, SHOULD I BE INSANELY JEALOUS OF THIS BOOTH?
OF COURSE NOT. WE'RE JUST FRIENDS NOW. IN HIGH SCHOOL, WE WROTE MORBID POETRY ABOUT LOVE AND BETRAYAL...
...WE WERE VERY CLOSE, THEN.
HE WAS MY FIRST, YOU KNOW.
OH, YEAH? YOUR FIRST WHAT?
OH.
"OH."
AND THIS IS YOUR ROOM. THINK YOU CAN SURVIVE HERE, ACE?
I DON'T KNOW. IT'S PRETTY FAR FROM YOUR ROOM...


...WHAT IF I LOSE MY WAY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT?
GABE, MY PARENTS...!
...I'M SURE YOU CAN COOL YOUR ARDOR FOR ONE WEEKEND, CAN'T YOU?
I'LL TRY.
GOOD. DINNER'S IN AN HOUR.
HAVE YOU INTRODUCED GABRIEL TO BOOTH? I THOUGHT SEEING HIM AGAIN WOULD BE A NICE SURPRISE FOR YOU.
IT CERTAINLY WAS, MOTHER
...AND THIS IS EVERETT LEIGHTON, AND HIS WIFE, TRISH.
WE'RE SO HAPPY FOR YOUR PARENTS, JENNIFER. TRISH AND I CELEBRATED OUR 30TH ANNIVERSARY EARLIER THIS YEAR.
DENNISON TELLS US YOU'RE A PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR, JENNIFER. I'LL BET THAT'S THE MOST INTERESTING WORK.
USUALLY, MRS. LEIGHTON, IT'S JUST ROUTINE.
EXCUSE ME, TRISH, BUT MAY I BORROW MY DAUGHTER FOR A MOMENT?
17


...BUT I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING BEFORE DINNER.
FATHER, WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT?
HERE WE ARE...
OH, FATHER, IT'S BEAUTIFUL...
EVERETT NEEDED THE MONEY, SOLD IT TO ME FOR A SONG. I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOUR MOTHER'S FACE WHEN SHE OPENS IT.
I KNOW I HAVEN'T ALWAYS BEEN THE BEST HUSBAND, OR THE BEST FATHER... BUT I DO LOVE YOU BOTH.
I KNOW, FATHER.
YOU'RE A WRITER, MR. WEBB? LIKE THAT WONDERFUL HAROLD ROBBINS?
I'M AFRAID I'M NOWHERE NEAR HIS INCOME BRACKET, MRS. LEIGHTON--I'M A TRUE CRIME WRITER.
BUT EVEN THAT MUST BE INTERESTING-- WHOOPS!
TRICIA!


TRICIA, YOU'RE DRUNK! LEAVE THE TABLE!
THAT'S NOT NECESSARY, MR LEIGHTON.
LEAVE THE TABLE!
Y-YES, DEAR...
I'M CERTAIN SHE'LL FEEL BETTER AFTER A REST...DO YOU RECOGNIZE THIS SILVER-WARE, JENNIFER?
IS THIS THE PRESENT I GOT YOU FOR YOUR 25TH ANNIVERSARY? I WAS ONLY 20 THEN. MY, HOW TIME FLIES...
SHALL I CARVE, SIR?
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN WITH US LONG, SNEAD-- CARVING THE BIRD IS MY AREA OF EXPERTISE.
I'M VERY SORRY SIR. HERE YOU ARE.
NOW YOU'RE ABOUT TO SEE SOMETHING YOU'LL REMEMBER..
DENNISON--!
9

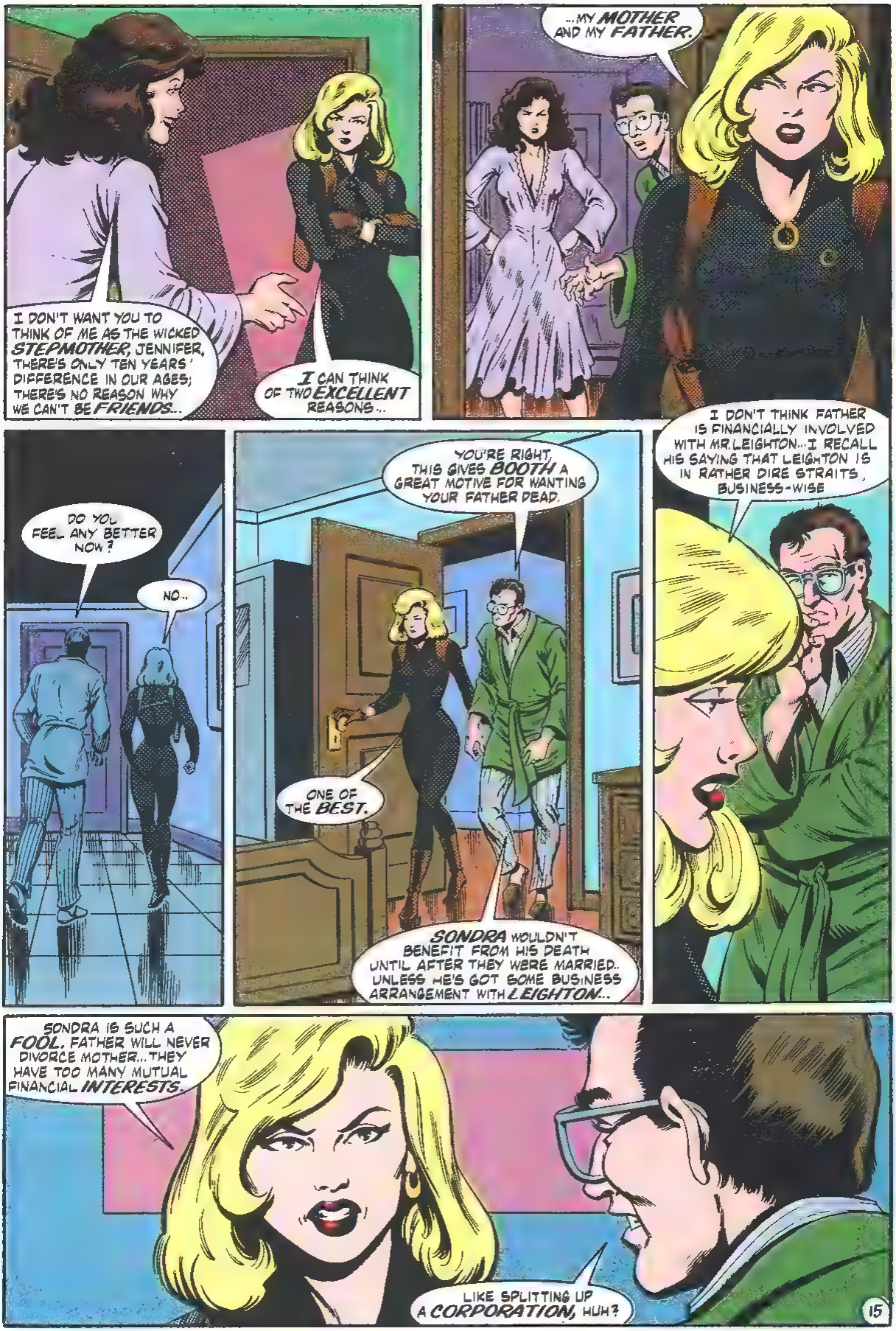
"IS HE ALL RIGHT, JENNIFER?"
I THINK SO, SONDRA. THE ELECTRIC KNIFE MUST HAVE SHORT-CIRCUITED; HE JUST GOT A BAD SHOCK.
GIVE HIM OUR BEST.
I WILL. EXCUSE ME.
THERESE, I FORBID YOU TO MENTION THIS TO JENNIFER! YOU'RE WORRYING OVER NOTHING!
FATHER, WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
THIS...THIS "ACCIDENT" ISN'T THE FIRST...!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, MOTHER?
"THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY, THERE WAS SOME KIND OF DREADFUL SNAKE... A COTTONMOUTH MOCCASIN, PLANTED IN YOUR FATHER'S ROOM...
"...AND YESTERDAY, THE STACK OF FIREWOOD IN THE BACKYARD NEARLY CRUSHED YOUR FATHER-- THAT'S WHY HE'S CARRYING THAT CANE!"

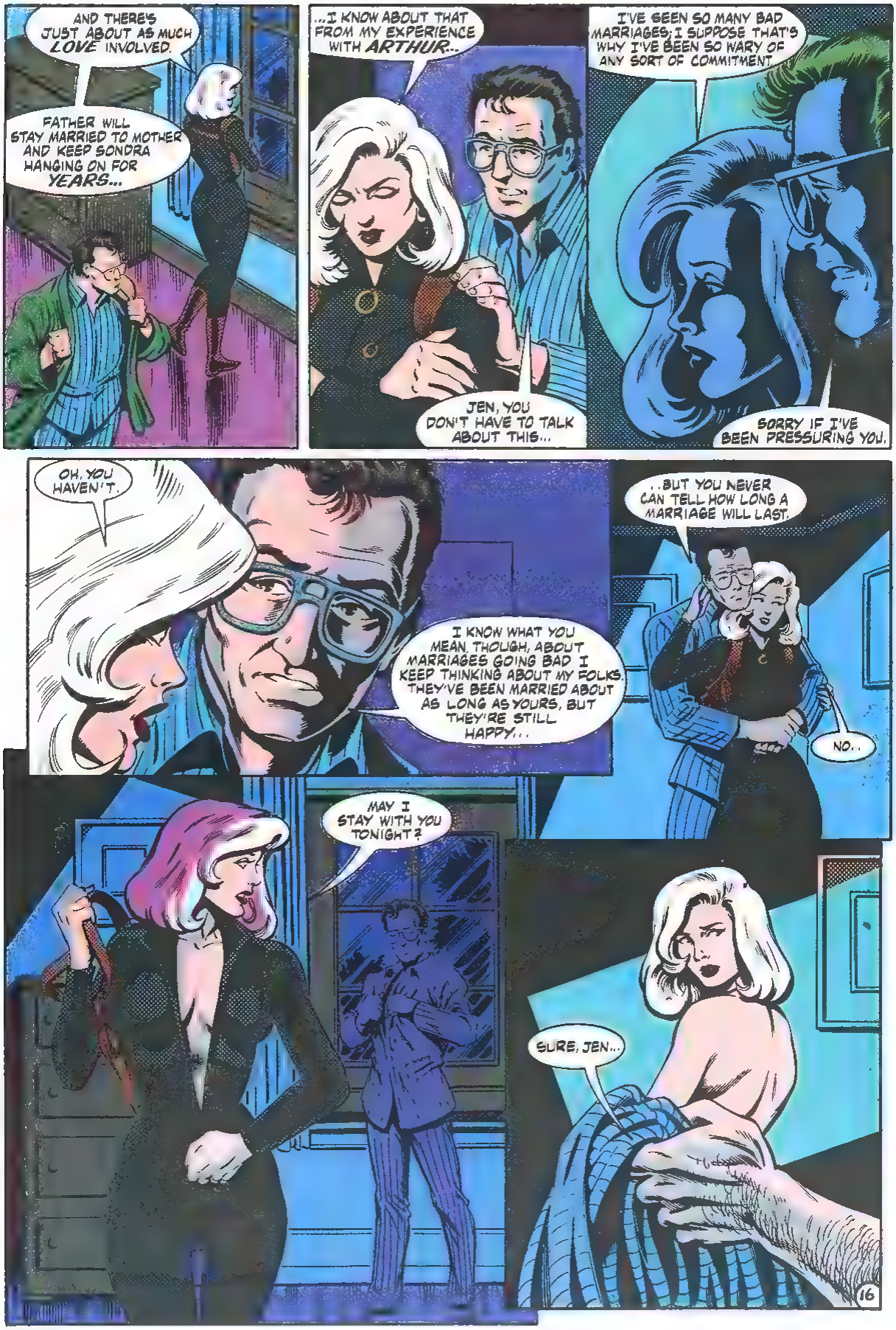

THE SNAKE CRAWLED INTO THE HOUSE TO GET WARM! AND I JUST STACKED THAT DAMN FIREWOOD TOO HIGH!
IT'S VERY HARD FOR ME TO ACCEPT THESE AS COINCIDENCES, FATHER!
YOU LISTEN TO ME, YOUNG WOMAN! I WORKED IN THE OSS IN WORLD WAR 2! IF THESE AREN'T ACCIDENTS, I KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM!
→SIGH← VERY WELL.
DID YOU MAKE ANYTHING OF THAT?
A COTTONMOUTH MOCCASIN, SOME FIREWOOD, AND AN ELECTRIC KNIFE... THERE'S SOME CONNECTION THERE, BUT I CAN'T PLACE IT NOW...
...WHAT ABOUT MOTIVE? IS THERE ANYONE IN THE HOUSE WHO'D WANT TO HARM HIM?
NO ONE. WELL, PERHAPS...
NO, NO ONE.
PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS ON THIS ONE, ACE. I'M WORRIED ABOUT HIM
I WORK BEST WITH A LITTLE INCENTIVE.
CONSIDER THIS AN ADVANCE.
11

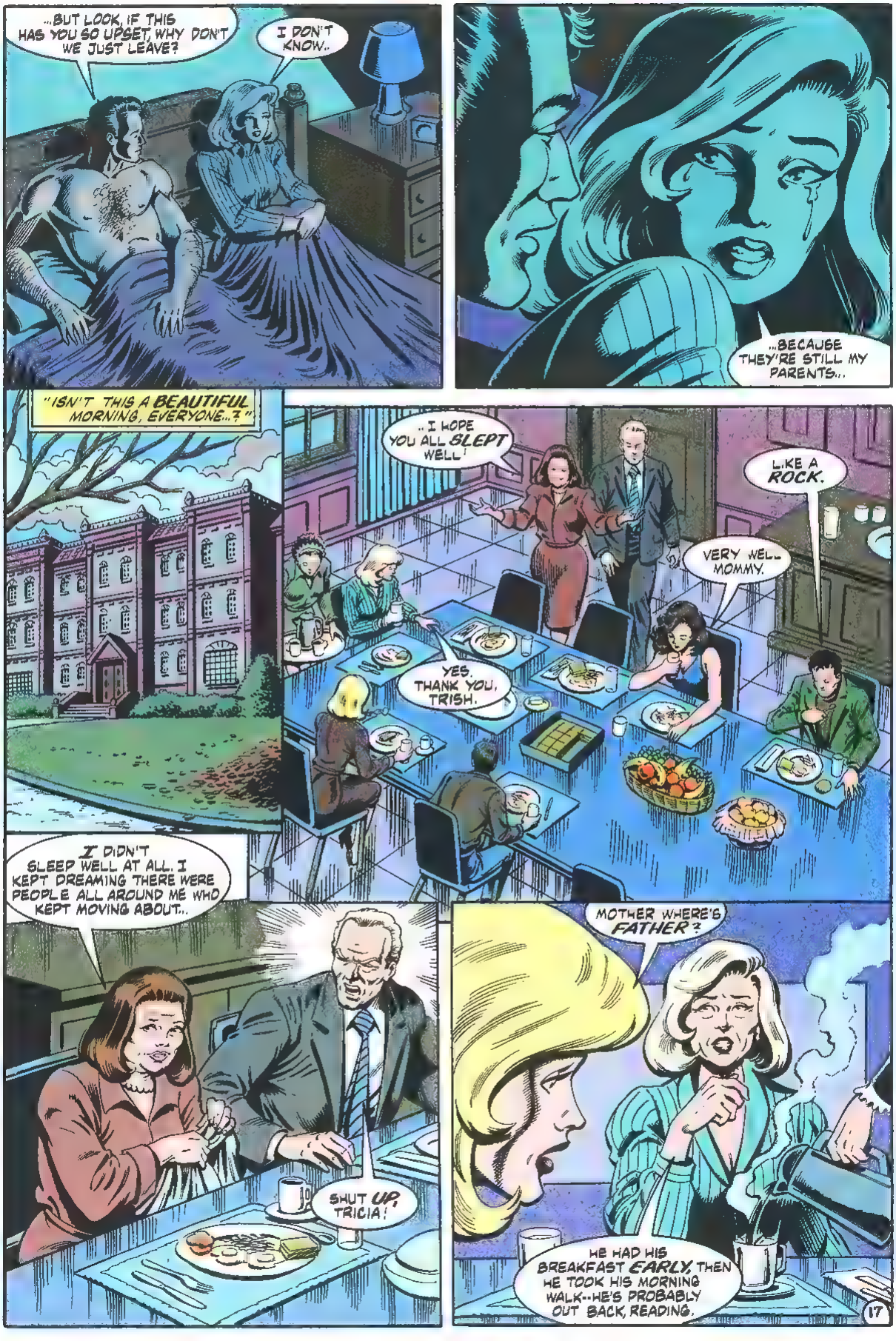
CREAAAK
MILK

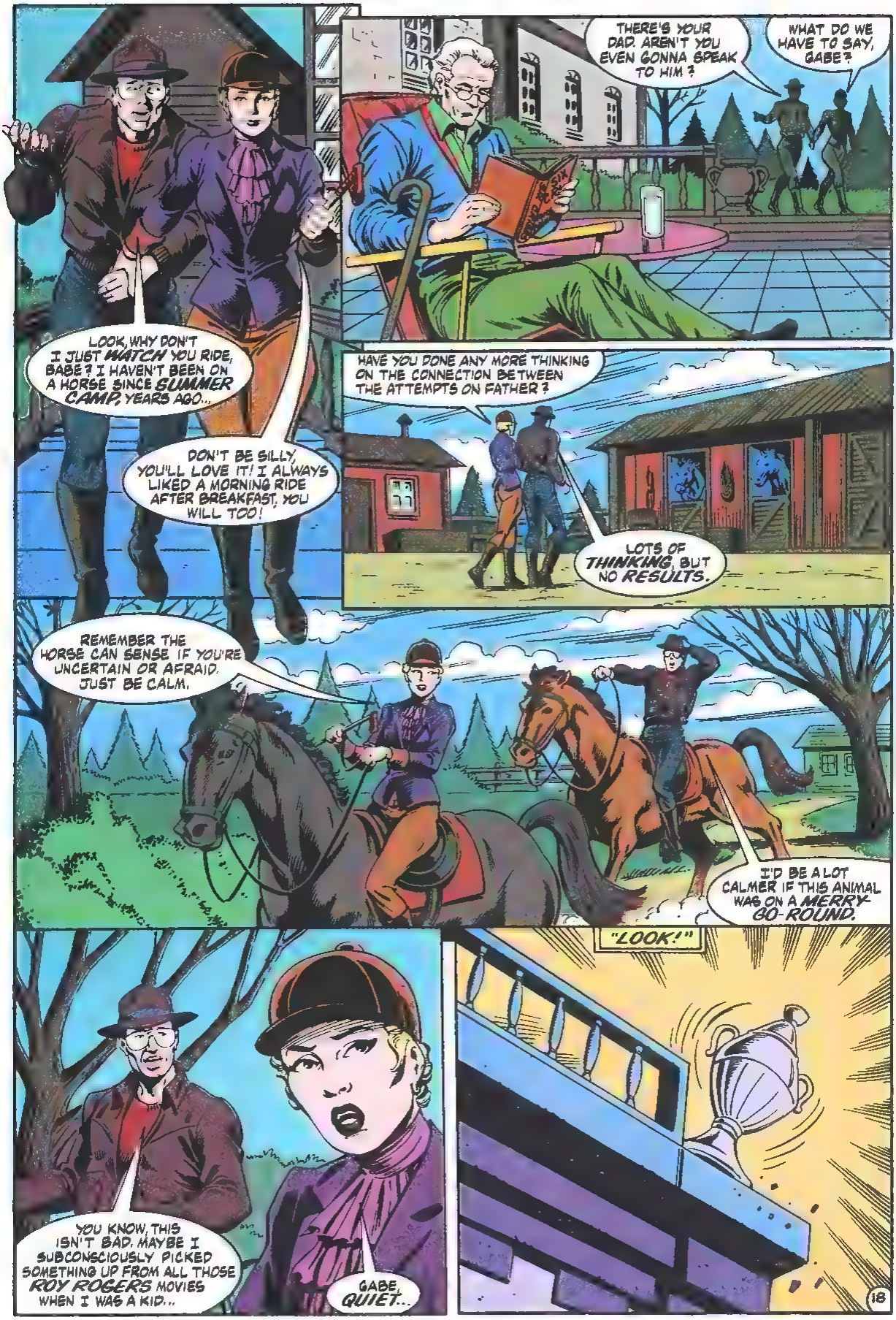
WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP?
I WAS--
IT DOESN'T MATTER. STAND BACK.
MOTHER!
JENNIFER?
HOW DARE YOU FOLLOW ME?
SOMEONE IS BEHIND THOSE THREATS TO FATHER, AND YOU HAVE THE MOST APPARENT MOTIVE.
MOTHER, HOW COULD YOU? THIS IS SO TAWDRY...
...HOW DARE YOU USE MY PRESENCE THIS WEEKEND AS AN EXCUSE TO BRING YOUR LOVER UNDER THIS ROOF?
PERHAPS THAT WAS WRONG
..BUT BOOTH MAKES ME FEEL YOUNG AGAIN-- HE GIVES ME SOMETHING TO LIVE FOR.
AND YOU'VE GIVEN HIM A MOTIVE TO KILL FATHER. SCULPTING IS AN ERRATIC SOURCE OF INCOME, AT BEST.
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT AT ALL, JENNY THERESE AND I LOVE EACH OTHER!
"LIKE DAUGHTER, ...KE MOTHER"? IS SHE AS GOOD IN BED AS I WAS, BOOTH?
13

SRAKKT
JEN, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
FIGURE IT OUT. THERE'S ONLY ONE PLACE THE OTHER HALVES OF THOSE COUPLES COULD BE...
...AND HERE WE ARE. YOU KNOW THE BIBLE, BABE. WASN'T IT NOAH WHO BROUGHT THE ANIMALS TWO BY TWO?
JENNIFER! WHAT IN HELL ARE YOU--?
...IT'S TIME SHE KNEW, DENNY.
...OUR MARRIAGE HAS BEEN A SHAM SINCE YOU WERE A GIRL. WE ONLY STAYED TOGETHER BECAUSE--
JENNIFER, YOU KNOW YOUR MOTHER AND I HAVE HAD SEPARATE BEDROOMS FOR YEARS...
DON'T YOU SAY YOU STAYED TOGETHER BECAUSE OF ME! I WON'T BE MADE RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT!
ANYWAY, DENNY'S PROMISED TO MARRY ME, AS SOON AS HE'S DIVORCED HER! ISN'T THAT RIGHT DENNY?
...
OF COURSE, SONDRA...


I DON'T WANT YOU TO THINK OF ME AS THE WICKED STEPMOTHER, JENNIFER. THERE'S ONLY TEN YEARS' DIFFERENCE IN OUR AGES; THERES NO REASON WHY WE CAN'T BE FRIENDS...
I CAN THINK OF TWO EXCELLENT REASONS...
...MY MOTHER AND MY FATHER.
I DON'T THINK FATHER IS FINANCIALLY INVOLVED WITH MR. LEIGHTON...I RECALL HIS SAYING THAT LEIGHTON IS IN RATHER DIRE STRAITS, BUSINESS-WISE
DO YOU FEEL ANY BETTER NOW?
NO...
YOU'RE RIGHT. THIS GIVES BOOTH A GREAT MOTIVE FOR WANTING YOUR FATHER DEAD.
ONE OF THE BEST.
SONDRA WOULDN'T BENEFIT FROM HIS DEATH UNTIL AFTER THEY WERE MARRIED.. UNLESS HE'S GOT SOME BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT WITH LEIGHTON...
SONDRA IS SUCH A FOOL. FATHER WILL NEVER DIVORCE MOTHER...THEY HAVE TOO MANY MUTUAL FINANCIAL INTERESTS.
LIKE SPLITTING UP A CORPORATION, HUH?


AND THERE'S JUST ABOUT AS MUCH LOVE INVOLVED.
FATHER WILL STAY MARRIED TO MOTHER AND KEEP SONDRA HANGING ON FOR YEARS...
...I KNOW ABOUT THAT FROM MY EXPERIENCE WITH ARTHUR...
JEN, YOU DON'T HAVE TO TALK ABOUT THIS...
I'VE SEEN SO MANY BAD MARRIAGES; I SUPPOSE THAT'S WHY I'VE BEEN SO WARY OF ANY SORT OF COMMITMENT.
SORRY IF I'VE BEEN PRESSURING YOU.
OH, YOU HAVEN'T.
I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN, THOUGH, ABOUT MARRIAGES GOING BAD I KEEP THINKING ABOUT MY FOLKS. THEY'VE BEEN MARRIED ABOUT AS LONG AS YOURS, BUT THEY'RE STILL HAPPY...
..BUT YOU NEVER CAN TELL HOW LONG A MARRIAGE WILL LAST.
NO..
MAY I STAY WITH YOU TONIGHT?
SURE, JEN...

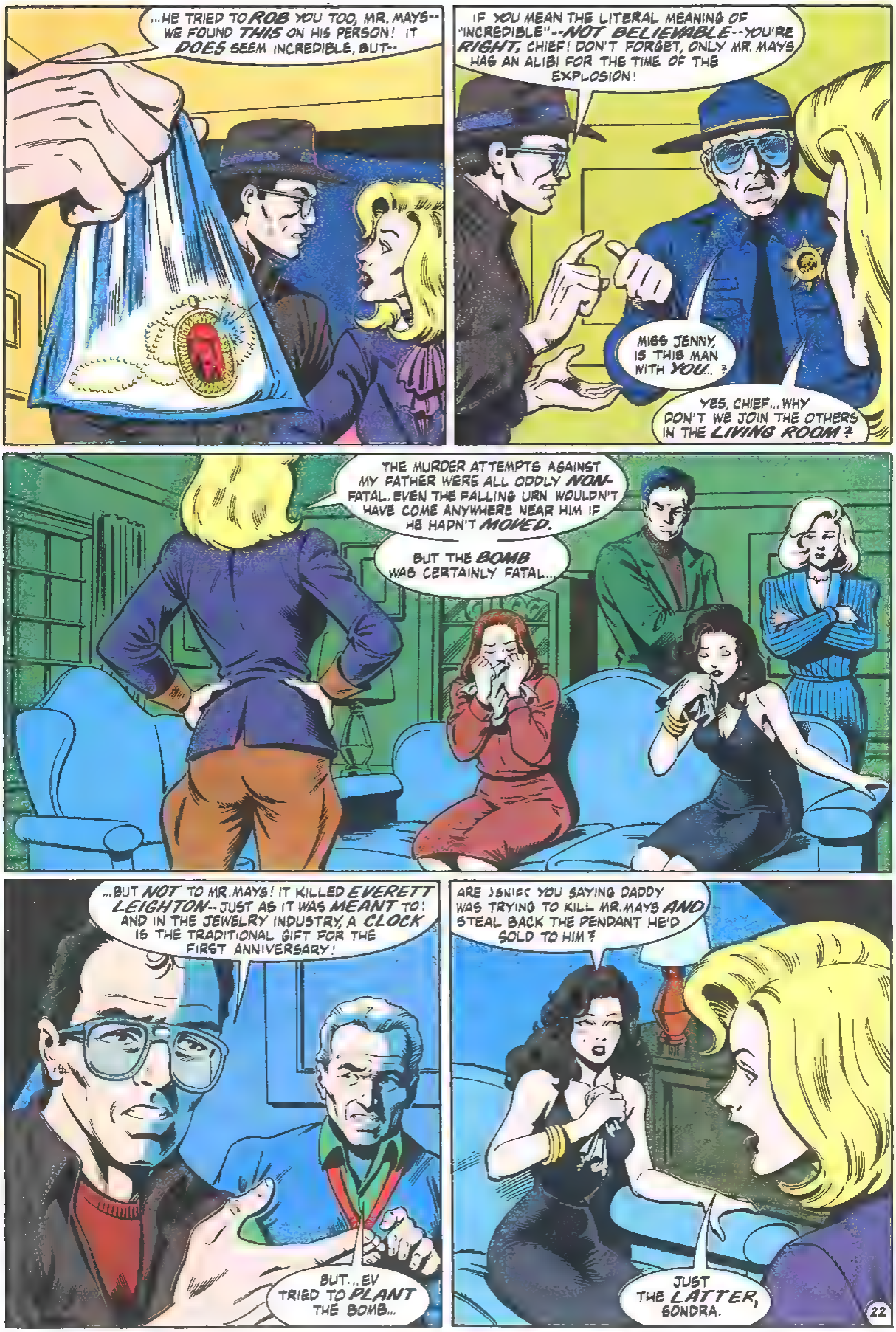

...BUT LOOK, IF THIS HAS YOU SO UPSET, WHY DON'T WE JUST LEAVE?
I DON'T KNOW..
...BECAUSE THEY'RE STILL MY PARENTS...
"ISN'T THIS A BEAUTIFUL MORNING, EVERYONE...?"
.. I HOPE YOU ALL SLEPT WELL!
LIKE A ROCK.
VERY WELL MOMMY.
YES, THANK YOU, TRISH.
I DIDN'T SLEEP WELL AT ALL. I KEPT DREAMING THERE WERE PEOPLE ALL AROUND ME WHO KEPT MOVING ABOUT..
SHUT UP, TRICIA!
MOTHER WHERE'S FATHER?
HE HAD HIS BREAKFAST EARLY, THEN HE TOOK HIS MORNING WALK--HE'S PROBABLY OUT BACK, READING.

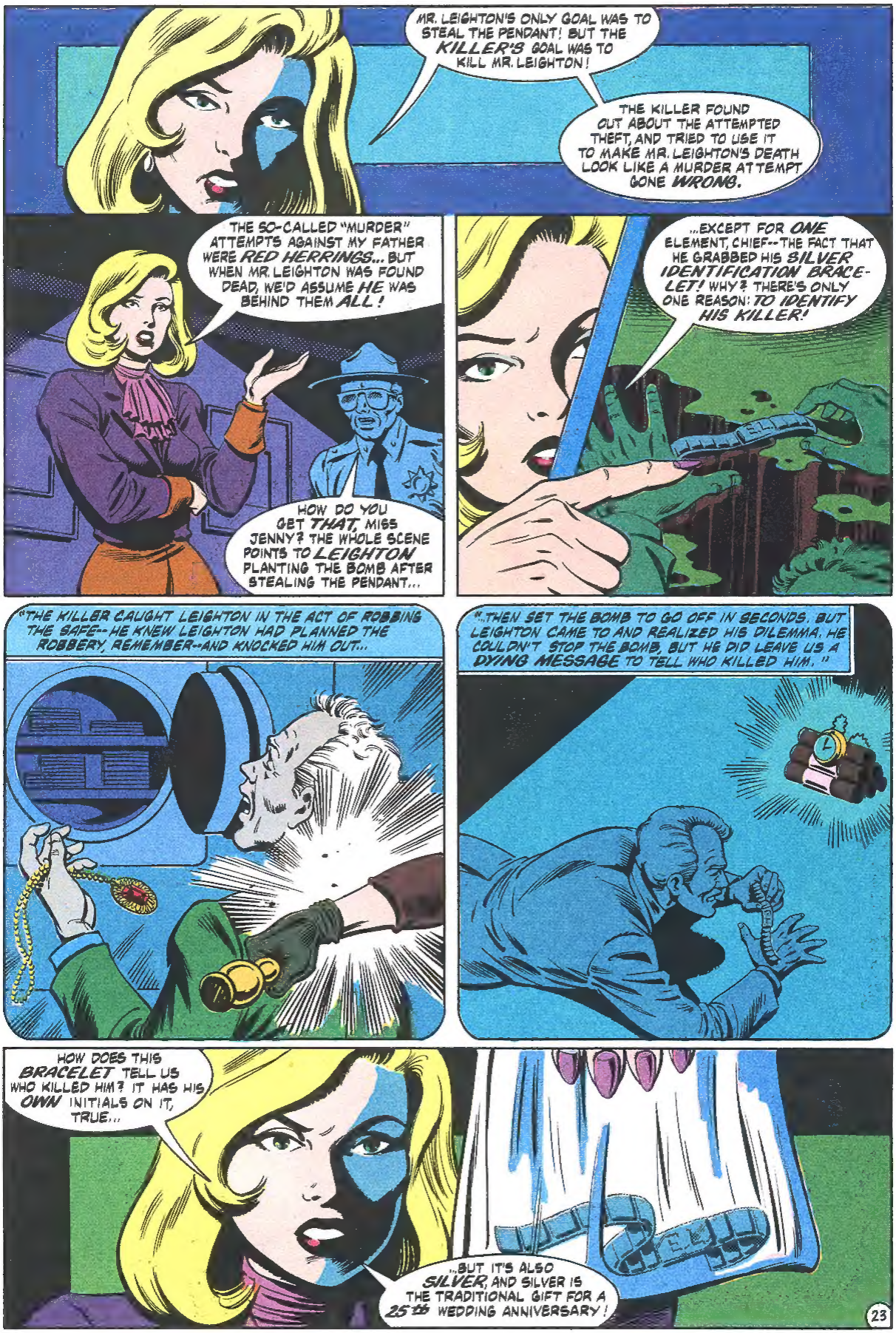

LOOK, WHY DON'T I JUST WATCH YOU RIDE, BABE? I HAVEN'T BEEN ON A HORSE SINCE SUMMER CAMP, YEARS AGO...
DON'T BE SILLY, YOU'LL LOVE IT! I ALWAYS LIKED A MORNING RIDE AFTER BREAKFAST, YOU WILL TOO!
THERE'S YOUR DAD. AREN'T YOU EVEN GONNA SPEAK TO HIM?
WHAT DO WE HAVE TO SAY, GABE?
HAVE YOU DONE ANY MORE THINKING ON THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE ATTEMPTS ON FATHER?
LOTS OF THINKING, BUT NO RESULTS.
REMEMBER THE HORSE CAN SENSE IF YOU'RE UNCERTAIN OR AFRAID. JUST BE CALM.
I'D BE A LOT CALMER IF THIS ANIMAL WAS ON A MERRY-GO-ROUND.
YOU KNOW, THIS ISN'T BAD. MAYBE I SUBCONSCIOUSLY PICKED SOMETHING UP FROM ALL THOSE ROY ROGERS MOVIES WHEN I WAS A KID...
GABE, QUIET...
"LOOK!"
18

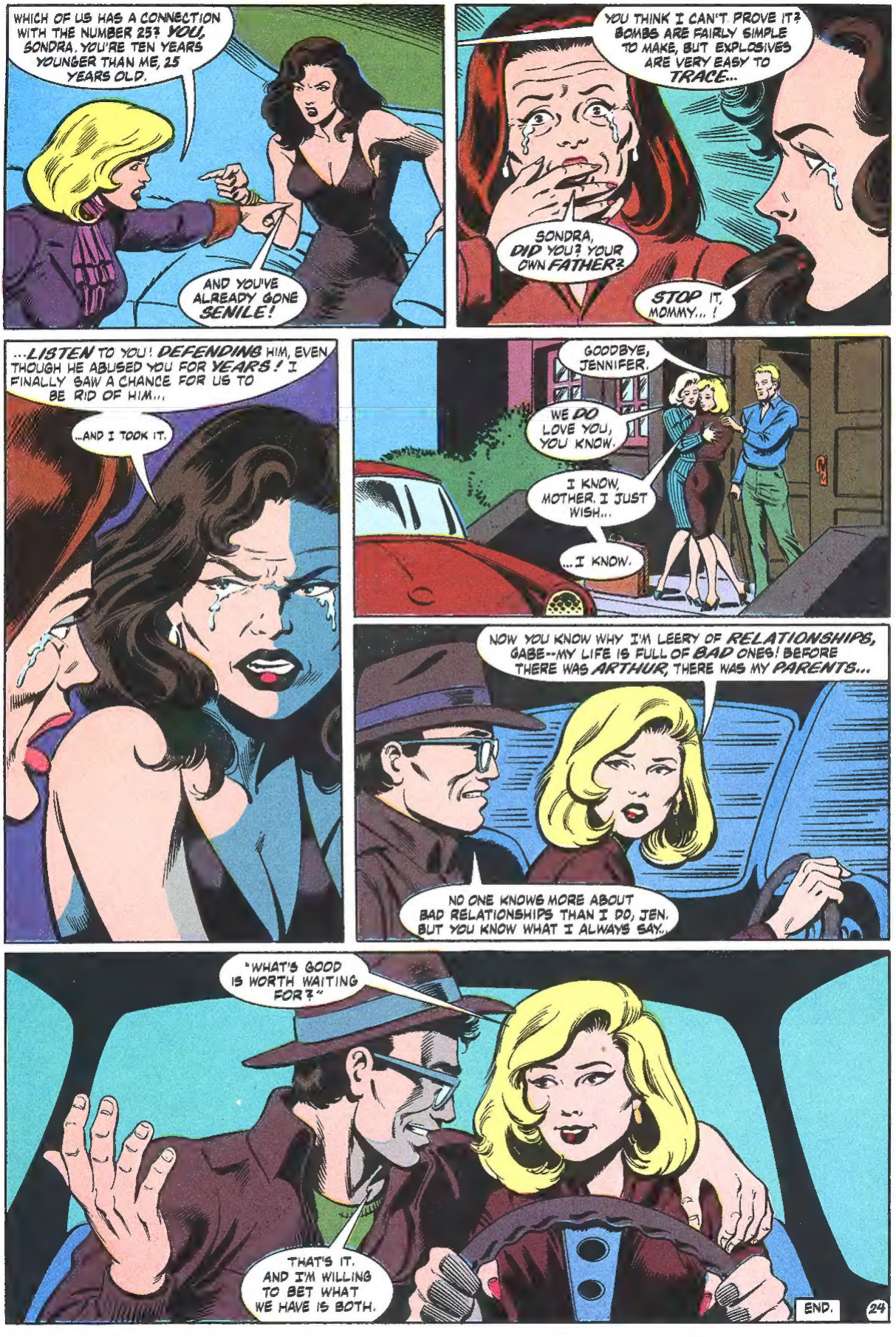
GIDDYAP!
KRAK
LET'S GO--!
WHAT--?

FATHER, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YES..BUT MAYBE I CAN CATCH WHOEVER PUSHED OVER THAT URN!
URN?
WHAT'S THAT IN THE HOLE WHERE THE URN WAS...? ICE...?
VERY CLEVER. THE URN WAS LOOSENED, AND THE ICE PLACED AGAINST IT TO STABILIZE IT. WHEN THE ICE MELTED, THE URN FELL.
THAT'S THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE ATTEMPTS ON YOU, MR. MAYS! IT'S AS SIMPLE AS GRAVITY!
GABE, WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
"A COTTONMOUTH MOCCASIN! A STACK OF WOOD, AN ELECTRIC KNIFE, AND A HUGE URN WHAT DO THEY HAVE IN COMMON..?"
...THEY'RE ALL WEDDING ANNIVERSARY GIFTS! COTTON FOR THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY WOOD FOR THE FIFTH, ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES FOR THE EIGHTH, AND POTTERY FOR THE NINTH!
IS HE SERIOUS?
VERY AND HE'S USUALLY RIGHT.
NUMERICALLY THE ATTEMPTS ARE GETTING HIGHER. THE PERSON BEHIND THIS MAY BE LEADING TO AN ATTEMPT INVOLVING THE RUBY PENDANT YOU BOUGHT FOR MRS. MAYS
AND USING ICE TO DROP THE URN GAVE HIM THE ABILITY TO BE SOMEPLACE ELSE WHILE THE URN FELL! HE MUST HAVE SOMETHING ELSE PLANNED--
20

WHAT WAS THAT?
I'M AFRAID I KNOW...
MY GOD, WHAT HAPPENED--?
EVERETT!
GABE, CALL THE POLICE... AND THE CORONER...
EVERYONE ELSE, PLEASE REMAIN HERE.
"THERE'S NO DOUBT THE EXPLOSION KILLED HIM, MR MAYS..."
COUNTY CORONER
.WE FOUND WHAT'S LEFT OF THE WORKS. A PRETTY SIMPLE HOMEMADE DEVICE. LOOKS LIKE IT GOT TRIGGERED WHILE HE WAS TRYING TO PLANT IT IN YOUR SAFE, AND HE RAN--BUT NOT VERY FAR.
EVERETT, TRYING TO KILL ME THAT'S INCREDIBLE, CHIEF CARMICHAEL.
STATE POLICE


...HE TRIED TO ROB YOU TOO, MR. MAYS-- WE FOUND THIS ON HIS PERSON! IT DOES SEEM INCREDIBLE, BUT--
IF YOU MEAN THE LITERAL MEANING OF "INCREDIBLE"--NOT BELIEVABLE--YOU'RE RIGHT, CHIEF! DON'T FORGET, ONLY MR. MAYS HAS AN ALIBI FOR THE TIME OF THE EXPLOSION!
MISS JENNY, IS THIS MAN WITH YOU..?
YES, CHIEF... WHY DON'T WE JOIN THE OTHERS IN THE LIVING ROOM?
THE MURDER ATTEMPTS AGAINST MY FATHER WERE ALL ODDLY NON-FATAL. EVEN THE FALLING URN WOULDN'T HAVE COME ANYWHERE NEAR HIM IF HE HADN'T MOVED.
BUT THE BOMB WAS CERTAINLY FATAL...
...BUT NOT TO MR. MAYS! IT KILLED EVERETT LEIGHTON--JUST AS IT WAS MEANT TO! AND IN THE JEWELRY INDUSTRY, A CLOCK IS THE TRADITIONAL GIFT FOR THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY!
BUT... EV TRIED TO PLANT THE BOMB...
ARE JENICE YOU SAYING DADDY WAS TRYING TO KILL MR. MAYS AND STEAL BACK THE PENDANT HE'D SOLD TO HIM?
JUST THE LATTER, SONDRA.


MR. LEIGHTON'S ONLY GOAL WAS TO STEAL THE PENDANT! BUT THE KILLER'S GOAL WAS TO KILL MR. LEIGHTON!
THE KILLER FOUND OUT ABOUT THE ATTEMPTED THEFT, AND TRIED TO USE IT TO MAKE MR. LEIGHTON'S DEATH LOOK LIKE A MURDER ATTEMPT GONE WRONG.
THE SO-CALLED "MURDER" ATTEMPTS AGAINST MY FATHER WERE RED HERRINGS... BUT WHEN MR. LEIGHTON WAS FOUND DEAD, WE'D ASSUME HE WAS BEHIND THEM ALL!
HOW DO YOU GET THAT, MISS JENNY? THE WHOLE SCENE POINTS TO LEIGHTON PLANTING THE BOMB AFTER STEALING THE PENDANT...
...EXCEPT FOR ONE ELEMENT, CHIEF--THE FACT THAT HE GRABBED HIS SILVER IDENTIFICATION BRACELET! WHY? THERE'S ONLY ONE REASON: TO IDENTIFY HIS KILLER!
"THE KILLER CAUGHT LEIGHTON IN THE ACT OF ROBBING THE SAFE--HE KNEW LEIGHTON HAD PLANNED THE ROBBERY, REMEMBER--AND KNOCKED HIM OUT...
"...THEN SET THE BOMB TO GO OFF IN SECONDS. BUT LEIGHTON CAME TO AND REALIZED HIS DILEMMA. HE COULDN'T STOP THE BOMB, BUT HE DID LEAVE US A DYING MESSAGE TO TELL WHO KILLED HIM."
HOW DOES THIS BRACELET TELL US WHO KILLED HIM? IT HAS HIS OWN INITIALS ON IT, TRUE...
...BUT IT'S ALSO SILVER, AND SILVER IS THE TRADITIONAL GIFT FOR A 25TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY!


WHICH OF US HAS A CONNECTION WITH THE NUMBER 25? YOU, SONDRA. YOU'RE TEN YEARS YOUNGER THAN ME, 25 YEARS OLD.
AND YOU'VE ALREADY GONE SENILE!
YOU THINK I CAN'T PROVE IT? BOMBS ARE FAIRLY SIMPLE TO MAKE, BUT EXPLOSIVES ARE VERY EASY TO TRACE...
SONDRA, DID YOU? YOUR OWN FATHER?
STOP IT, MOMMY...!
...LISTEN TO YOU! DEFENDING HIM, EVEN THOUGH HE ABUSED YOU FOR YEARS! I FINALLY SAW A CHANCE FOR US TO BE RID OF HIM...
...AND I TOOK IT.
GOODBYE, JENNIFER.
WE DO LOVE YOU, YOU KNOW.
I KNOW, MOTHER. I JUST WISH...
...I KNOW.
NOW YOU KNOW WHY I'M LEERY OF RELATIONSHIPS, GABE--MY LIFE IS FULL OF BAD ONES! BEFORE THERE WAS ARTHUR, THERE WAS MY PARENTS...
NO ONE KNOWS MORE ABOUT BAD RELATIONSHIPS THAN I DO, JEN. BUT YOU KNOW WHAT I ALWAYS SAY..
"WHAT'S GOOD IS WORTH WAITING FOR?"
THAT'S IT. AND I'M WILLING TO BET WHAT WE HAVE IS BOTH.
END.

(Continued from inside front cover!)

Dear Mike --

Issue #7 of *The Maze Agency* was, in the way, the most depressing of the seven issues. First, it didn't have a clean, clear, happy ending; and second, all the pain and hurt that Jennifer was trying to forget about her CIA past came back in one swift move, and she couldn't do a thing about it. I am glad to see, though, that progress is being made in the development of the Jen/Gave love life storyline. And the story in general was good. It had me guessing right up to the end as to the identity of the murderer (or murderess, as the case might be).

The artists this issue, while not being overly great, did a very good job. I felt that some spots in the book could have been better, but they were small things anyway. (It's easy for me to talk when I am on the outside looking in.)

Overall, though, I did enjoy looking at the book.

Galen S. West
1236 Mt. Whitney
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

And that's the bottom line, right, Galen? Personally, I thought Greg and Bill's rendition of Jennifer was cute as a button, and their Gabe is attractive without being too handsome. So what's the verdict on Robb Phipps?

Dear Mike and Michael *(Eury, editor emeritus)* --

I just wanted to tell you that ***THE MAZE AGENCY*** is my favorite comic. One of the things I like, besides great characters, stories, and coloring, is that each story is completed in one issue. When many comics come out with continuing storylines it tends to make the story seem too long and drawn-out. The crispness of ***MAZE*** makes it one of the best comics published today.

Jennifer and Gabe are favorites, but what gives with Lieutenant Bliss? I wouldn't mind seeing a little background on her and her relationship with Gabe and Jen in future issues. Keep up the good work.

Everyone loves a mystery.

Cheryl A. Fedorcio
3704 Dawning Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44109

Everyone would apparantly love to know more about Lt. Bliss, too, Cheryl -- yours is by no means the only letter we've gotten asking for more about her. As a result, a future issue will focus on the Lieutenant, and will disclose a little about her personal life, as well.

And Gabe says "Hello" to everyone at his alma mater, Patrick Henry University, located in Cleveland.

NEXT ISSUE: *The mail on #8, our first Innovation issue! What more do we need? What's that, Dave? We need a* story, *too? Oh, okay....*

NEXT ISSUE: *Besides being our first anniversary issue, it'll be our first annual* **Christmas** *issue, as well! It's all about a pregnant mother looking for a place to have her baby, while being sought by two groups of men. Sound familiar? Don't be too sure until you've read "The Crime Before Christmas," in* ***MAZE #11.*** Plus *a major step in the relationship between Jen and Gabe. Art by* Robb Phipps *and* Rick Magyar; *with script by the same old writer, and a cover by* Alan Davis! *Yep,* **the** *Alan Davis! Be here in late December -- and don't forget the mistletoe!*

-- MWB

Next Issue:

"'Twas The Crime Before Christmas"

...Not A Creature Was Stirring...

By
MIKE W. BARR
ROBB PHIPPS
RICK MAGYAR
ADAM HUGHES

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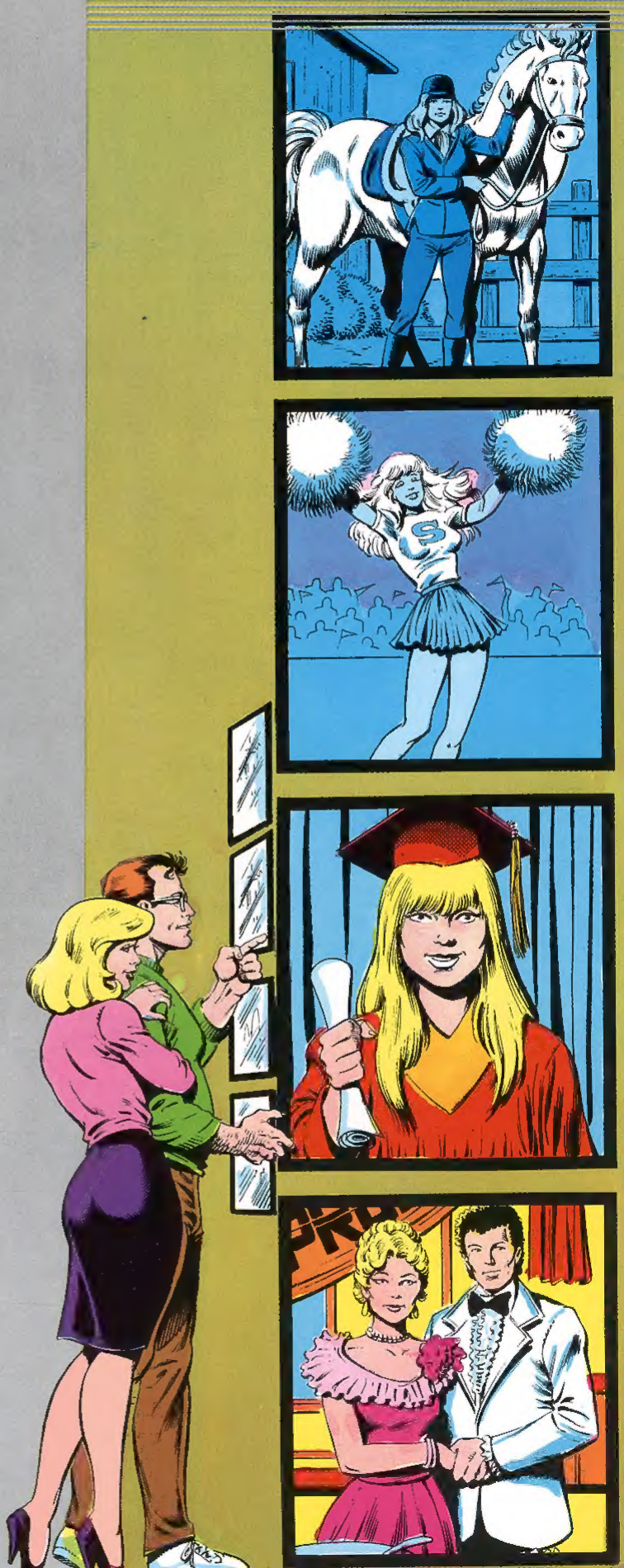
LAST ISSUE: Gabe and Jennifer, along with a certain famous sleuth and idol of Gabe's, stalked a killer who moved through sand without a clue -- and who had been dead for 10,000 years!

THIS ISSUE: In "Deadly Anniversary," Gabe Webb meets the parents of his sweetie Jennifer! And if things weren't tense enough, one of the house guests is trying to murder Jennifer's father on the eve of his 40th wedding anniversary. This issue also reveals more of Jennifer's past -- to both Gabe's delight and consternation!

Murder By The Numbers...Or Something Else?